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Bush Negroes
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village. A household was not confined to one building only, but few who were not men of rank and means had more than three. One was for the woman and her children, another for storing the crops, and the third was the man's treasure house, where women might not come. It was like the matter of wives. Only men of position could afford more than one. But if a man had two wives and both lived in his village, then perhaps five huts would bear a design identified with him on the carved side posts which outlined the low doorway. This design would recur in the various carvings he had made for his women—it was his crest. And though a man from another village, who was not related to him, might like it, and liking it copy it, this practice would be socially frowned upon.

A village quarter, however, did not contain only dwelling places, and storehouses, and men's treasure houses. Certain families also had in their part of the village an enclosed shrine for the family gods. If in a given family a powerful Vodu, or snake god, had come to an ancestress and had in a dream, or in a seizure, or through a revelation made to an obia man, chosen her as his *'asi*—his priestess or medium—then with this disclosure came the instructions for the place of locating a house of worship to that Vodu, and the type of house it was to be. Such a shrine, once erected, would be kept in the quarter, and worshiped by the members of that family. Sometimes in front of a dwelling hut, a low enclosure, the size of a small kennel, would stand a little to the side of the door. This was a house to Toné, the river spirit. In one such house lived a woman who had a great Toné god. She had the gift of prophecy. When the men gathered for a council meeting in the village of the Granman, then she, too, would sometimes be bidden to come and sit with the men, though, being a woman, she could never speak at council meetings.

"Touch her skin," the other women said, pointing out this albino woman, "and you will have your desires fulfilled."

In each quarter, too, there was an open house where the women did their cooking, and perhaps a platform or two,

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where, in the proper season, maripa nuts and rice were dried.

One quarter differed very little from another, except that in one there might grow the plant which yielded the red and black beans used for the sacred rattles, and for playing the game of adji, which entertained the spirit of the dead while the body lay in state. Instead of a house to the family gods, there might be found a mound of earth in front of one doorway, with an axe-head lying upon it as a shrine for a man's spirit, or a low forked stick sunk into the ground, holding a pot with water and weeds in it for the curing powers of its obia.

A village of any size had also a quarter in which stood the communal buildings. The council house which might also serve on occasion as the house for the dead was there. The menstrual house for the women, a small building which was recognized by a broken calabash, or a porcelain pot brought from the white man's city, lying outside the entrance, stood a little to the side. The Kromanti house, and perhaps an enclosed shelter for the bush gods who shared the shrine with the snake deities, was also located somewhere near the open communal shrine. A village wherein lived the clan head contained in addition a house for the ancestral spirits of the clan. This was called a *Fa'aka-pau wosu*, literally a flagpole house, a euphemism for the shrine to the ancestors for whom white cotton was put up on sticks. In this Fa'aka-pau wosu prayers were offered up for all the important ventures of the clan, and in time of stress a priest would come there with sacrifices, to bid one of the ancestors to enter his body and give him sight. When seizure came on, such a priest prophesied. Sometimes the ancestors were consulted in the same manner as that in which the will of the dead was ascertained. Men would take up a sacred plank and carry it in a state of possession; the elders would put questions to the ancestor who had been called. The answers were construed as favorable or unfavorable according to the way the plank tipped.

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cloths, their hair disheveled, their faces without the glint which the oil gave to their dark skins, and their eyes without the touch of dark flame which the gleaming skins brought out. One of these women stood leaning against a doorpost trembling. Her hands were clenched, and her mouth moved without pause, and without sound.

"She hears the agida?"

"Ai. She wants to dance, but she can't. Her god is troubling her."

The white woman must not stop with them longer, and she must not come closer, the two women who stood beside their quivering companion called out at once, for the obia which she wore about her neck would be contaminated if brought too close to them, and its power to protect the wearer against danger would leave it at once.

"Do not come too close. Tomorrow I will return to my house, and after I have bathed and washed in pemba, I will be clean again, and then I will come to see you," the younger of the two women said.

The other said, "When you go there," and she pointed toward the woman's path, "do not go by the way of the broken calabashes. That is the unclean way. It is the path for the women who stay in this house."

Down the clearing the white woman continued until, when she turned, the open cooking shelter of Bassia Anaisi's quarter faced her. The floor of the shelter was of red clay, raised well above the clearing itself. A woman was laying a fire there, putting down the long sticks one end close to the other in the center, so that they radiated outwards in what seemed a perfect circle. Her child, who was fitted out with obias on neck and wrists and right ankle, sat near by watching her, and playing with a gourd doll.

The voice of the agida had a moment before died down, and now a song reached the white woman. It came not from across the river, but from somewhere directly behind the houses grouped about the clearing beyond the cooking shelter. The song was a repetition of several melodic phrases, sung in varying rhythms, so that it had a disturb-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Saramaccaner

is used as a living-room; cooking is sometimes carried on there, but more often in an open communal kitchen used by the entire village. Some towns have several such open sheds.

We enter the hut where the headman of the village lives, and find him lying in his hammock. It is perhaps a bit of conscious arrogance, to demonstrate his independence of the white man, that the captain does not rise to greet us. He rises, however, to greet Abaisa.

"Well, friend, how are you?" we begin. In talkee-talkee the question runs: *"So, matti, fie you tang?"*

He replies civilly, complaining a little, perhaps. We offer him a few leaves of tobacco, always acceptable. While we parley with the chief, the men of the village are carrying our equipment up from the corials to the village. This they always do, without being asked and without being paid. Even small children take part in the portage. Nothing is ever stolen.

Quite conscious of the heat inside the dark hut, we do not palaver long. Leaving the two chiefs lolling in hammocks we pass out of the breast-high doorway into the clearing, and go about examining the living-quarters and the people. This is a village of the Saramaccaner tribe, descended from the Saramacca rebels of two hundred years ago. All the huts and villages of this tribe are quite similar. Among the Aucaner tribe, descended from the Ouca rebels, are villages of a different type.

One does not doubt the good intentions of the Moravian Brothers and certain Catholics who have established missions at a few points on the rivers. But their evangelical efforts have

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Rice, especially when ripening, is attacked by birds, particularly the parakeets and parrots. These can destroy an entire field in one evening. Sometimes the Djukas are forced to sit up all night with shotguns to scare them off. Weevils and plant diseases are also common.

They have large sweet potatoes, known as yams, but no white potatoes. Corn, which they call *koru;* okra, or *oko;* and peanuts (*pinda*), form a minor part of the Djuka diet. There are occasional banana and cocoanut trees, and some pineapples and breadfruit. Some few additional nuts and fruits are furnished by the jungle. Palm oil, of which they are excessively fond, is another part of the commissary. No journey is undertaken without a liberal supply. It is obtained by squeezing the nut or fruit of a species of palm, called the mareepa. To the white man it tastes like olive oil. Sugar cane is seen in a number of villages, as are domestic fowl. No cattle or swine are to be found.

Thus the Bush Negroes carry on with courage and extreme hardihood under the implacable necessities of life in the enemy jungle, in which the white man has never been able to make his home successfully.

A common sight along the river is a Djuka black, poised on a slippery rock in statuesque immobility, his bow flexed and arrow drawn, shooting for fish.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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obeiahs, house gods, fetish houses, menstrual huts, and matrilineal system of inheritance are all to be found as ancient customs among the forest tribes of the West Coast. Other details, such as the use of chickens for sacrificial animals, the huts with their rectangular walls, the manufacture of butter from the palm worm, the sacredness of snakes and alligators, the use of drums for religious supplication, and the beating of them with the hand instead of with a stick as the Indians do, are also customs which are similar to West African customs and probably derived from them. The impaled turtle-shell on a staff, the badge of the witch doctor's profession, represents the symbol for the female genitalia among some West African tribes. The Bush Negroes' boats and paddles are typically African in design. The *awasa* dance of the Saramaccaners was borrowed from the Aucaners, among whom it is a direct West African survival.

From the study of these culture survivals among the Djuka tribes it can be seen that most of the jungle civilization of the Bush Negroes is derived from their West African ancestry, modified here and there by contact with the Indians of their new home. The remainder of the material culture of the Bush Negroes is borrowed from the white settlements along the coast, from which gunpowder, fish-hooks, bush-knives, and other articles filter upstream.

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[For information on various types of buildings and other physical structures or facilities present in each of the Boni villages, see the village plans on pp. 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, and 76, category 116. Included are data on the occurrence of menstrual huts (munu), kitchens, granaries, and sundry other outbuildings, religious structures (gadu), mortuary sheds, boatbuilding yards, guest houses for visitors, wharfs, fraga tiki (i.e. lineage ancestor cult shrines and objects), and useful trees within the village area which are personally owned.]

/254 cont./

841 Woman's magic power. The Refugee Blacks assume that a woman, during her menstrual periods, is impure and has the power to destroy the power of ɔbia. So during these periods she must withdraw into a special hut, munu ɔsu, and prepare her meals in special dishes; she may not prepare her husband's food, for by doing this she would destroy the power of his ɔbia, and must abstain from touching objects he habitually uses, particularly his gun, which would lose its good points for shooting. Even in the little farming habitations which consist of only several huts, one may be sure that one of them serves as a munu ɔsu.

841 343 462 [465] The munu ɔsu are very simple sheds built by the women themselves, using reclaimed materials taken from huts being demolished; some belong to one woman only; for others, three or four women get together. They have recourse to men only for assembling the framework, remunerating them with several cans of couac or several baskets of yams.

841 /255/ A man who has a powerful ɔbia like the man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia must abstain from speaking to a woman who has her menses.

[751] The Boni assume there are women wicked enough to willfully hide their menses in order to destroy the power of a man's ɔbia, but he who has a good man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia cannot be a dupe: the iron circle warns him of the danger by squeezing his arm.

184 841 68 According to Mr. W. F. van Lier, the act of willfully hiding her menses is for the Djuka one of the gravest offenses a woman can commit, and the most severe punishments are inflicted on her. It is not the same with the Boni: in such a case a woman risks only being insulted and banned.

752 834 171 Another deeply rooted belief among the Refugee Blacks, and which exists with many Creoles, is the necessity for the